

The Federal Flyer

House Committee Passes FY 2001 Transportation Spending Bill *Measure Honors TEA 21 & AIR 21, Texas Receives Few Project Earmarks*

Tuesday the House Committee on Appropriations approved the FY 2001 appropriations bill for the U. S. Department of Transportation and Related Agencies. The measure, which passed by voice vote, provides \$55.236 billion for the nation's federal transportation programs.

Bill Honors TEA 21 and AIR 21. As in previous years, the House Committee essentially ignored the Clinton Administration's proposal to redirect some unanticipated highway user fee revenues to other programs, choosing instead to apply TEA 21's Revenue Aligned Budget Authority provisions to all additional revenues. Total highway spending in the measure accounts for \$30.7 billion, an increase of \$1.9 billion (almost 7 percent) over FY 2000 spending levels. Under the bill, Texas could expect to obligate about \$1.9 billion in federal highway funds for formula-funded highway programs during FY 2001, an increase of about \$92 million over FY 2000. Similarly, transit programs would see spending in FY 2001 of \$6.3 billion, an increase of \$486 million over the current year. The Federal Aviation Administration and its programs would receive \$12 billion in FY 2001, an increase of \$2.0 billion over FY 2000 levels, as a result of the higher spending levels authorized under AIR 21. Within the FAA total, the Airport Improvement Program would receive \$3.2 billion under the House bill, an increase of \$1.3 billion over FY 2000. The bill would provide a total of \$4.6 billion for the Coast Guard.

Details of note include: Repeal of the federal matching requirement for rail-highway grade crossings hazard elimination grants, making it easier for states to draw down more than \$140 million in unobligated funds intended to reduce fatalities at highway/rail grade crossings. The bill would also increase motor carrier safety grant funds to \$177 million in FY 2001, consistent with reforms enacted as part of the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999. In addition, the bill would increase funding for critical highway safety research and development of smart vehicle technologies.

Texas Receives Few Transportation Earmarks. Although the committee received dozens of requests from Texas members for special earmarks in the bill, Texas ended up with fewer earmarks in the House version of the FY 2001 bill than in the FY 2000 act. A chart at the end of this article includes current information about earmarks Texas would receive in the House bill.

Although the Committee Report earmarks \$5.0 million for the Houston advanced transit program, the bill includes a provision prohibiting the expenditure of any of the funds it provides for "the preliminary engineering, design or construction" of a component of that program, Houston's light rail system. Funds provided for the Houston advanced transit program would therefore be available only for other components of the program.

The Committee Report directs FAA to give priority to applications for discretionary funding from six Texas projects: terminal expansion and taxiway upgrade at Abilene Regional Airport; a new runway at George Bush International Airport in Houston; a runway extension and other improvements at Alliance Airport in Fort Worth; property acquisition and taxiway construction at Sugar Land Municipal Airport; a noise compatibility program at Laredo Airport; and the joint use development of the Robert Gray Army Airfield at Fort Hood.

The Texas Department of Transportation's Legislative Affairs Office will report on other key details from the bill in a future issue of the **Federal Flyer**. We will also continue to monitor the FY 2001 appropriations process in the coming weeks. The Senate Appropriations Committee is not expected to take up their version of the transportation spending measure until early June. In addition, neither committees has yet marked up their FY 2001 energy and water development appropriations bills, which fund U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects affecting the Gulf Intracoastal Waterways system.

Project Name	Amount of Earmark	Category
City of Sulphur Springs	\$750,000	Transportation & Community & Systems Preservation (TCSP)
Fort Worth trolley study	\$750,000	TCSP
Corpus Christi	\$1,000,000	Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Deployment
College Station	\$2,000,000	ITS Deployment
Houston	\$1,000,000	ITS Deployment
Austin buses	\$1,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Brazos Transit District, buses	\$1,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Corpus Christi	\$500,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Dallas, buses	\$750,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
El Paso, buses	\$500,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Fort Worth, intermodal transportation center	\$5,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Fort Worth, buses & bus facilities	\$4,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Galveston, buses & bus facilities	\$500,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Harris County, buses & bus facilities	\$4,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Houston, main street transit improvements	\$1,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Lubbock, buses & bus facilities	\$2,000,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Waco, maintenance facility	\$3,300,000	Bus & Bus Facilities
Dallas north central light rail extension project	\$70,000,000	Transit New Starts
Houston advanced transit program	\$5,000,000	Transit New Starts
Houston regional bus project	\$10,750,000	Transit New Starts
Houston Hobby Airport	\$818,550	Terminal Air Traffic Control Facilities

The **Federal Flyer** is a publication of the TxDOT Legislative Affairs Office. It is intended to provide up-to-date information on major legislative activities in the 106th Congress for the management of the Texas Department of Transportation, state leaders, and others interested in Texas transportation issues. This report will also feature key activities in the national transportation community. Sources include news services and staff reports.

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